

Thule Times

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Finish strong—make it count!

By Col. John Haven
821 Air Base Group Commander

Greetings Team Thule! We're another day closer to completing our Operational Readiness Inspection. While the end is near, we can't lose sight of our objective.

We must remember to remain vigilant and always be prepared for any challenges that come our way.

So far, we've completed several exercise scenarios and provided various on-scene responses. We've also exercised our checklists and run through our processes.

Without a doubt, I know that the inspection team has taken note of our professionalism and Team Thule pride. I know I have, and I'm proud of the teamwork I've seen throughout the

week.

While we're almost on the home-stretch, it's still important that we reflect on tips for success that will help Team Thule finish this inspection strong.

Fix it now! - Throughout the inspection, we've seen areas that can be improved. Remember, if the IG identifies a small problem in your area, fix it on the spot! By showing that you're responsive and receptive to the issue, the problem could be dismissed.

Hustle! - If you come across a scenario that demands a sense of urgency, then just do it. Hustle conveys a sense of intensity and ultimately shows our readiness to response to any situation.

Every day is day one! - I know we're all exhausted, but it's important we remain fired up and approach every

day as if it were the first day of the inspection.

I appreciate the hard work each one of you have committed to this inspection - proving once again that we are one team, one fight.



Photo by 1st Lt Jennifer Tribble

Senior Master Sgt Toby Deaton, AFSPC/IG, reviews Thule's Plans and Programs during the ORI inspection with Tech Sgt Charles Dickens.

Air Force announces Thrift Savings Plan open season

By Master Sgt. Randy L. Mitchell
AFPC Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- Civilian and military employees can sign up for, or change, their Thrift Savings Plan contribution amounts during the "open season" Oct. 15 - Dec. 31.

"TSP is a long-term retirement savings plan, which everyone should consider," said Senior Master Sgt. Felipe Ortiz, superintendent of the Air Force Personnel Contact Center here. "It's a great supplement to military and civilian retirement plans.

"It's also important to note that TSP is not limited to investing in stocks," said Sergeant Ortiz. "People can choose safer government securities as well."

This open season applies only to regular TSP contributions. It does not include TSP catch-up contributions, as they are not tied to open seasons, according to Janet Thomas, of AFPC's civilian benefits and entitlements service team.

TSP offers investors the chance for lower taxes each year they contribute while not having to pay taxes on earnings until they reach retirement.

"Eligible employees can take out loans and make in-service withdrawals from their TSP accounts," said Ms. Thomas. "And you can keep your account, even if you leave military or federal civilian service."

Investment money is deposited directly from each paycheck "so you never have to think about it," said Sergeant Ortiz. "That makes it easy to 'pay yourself first' while only investing what

you deem appropriate."

The five TSP funds are: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund; the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund; the Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund; the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund; and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

"As with any individual retirement account, the sooner you begin contributing, the better," said Ms. Thomas.

Contribution elections/changes made between Oct. 15 and Dec. 11 will take effect Dec. 12, for both military and civilian personnel. Changes made on or after Dec. 12 will become effective at the beginning of the pay period following the one in which the election is made for civilians and the following month for military.

Team Thule welcomes newest addition



Above: The new Civil Engineering Service Station officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, emceed by Capt. Tyler Nielsen, Oct. 1. Above right: Members of Team Thule gather together to witness the "ribbon cutting" ceremony performed by Col. John Haven, 821 Air Base Group Commander. The new service station is located next to Hangar 10. Right: Col. Haven pumps the first gallon of gas. The station offers both diesel and gas. Below right: The ceremony concluded at the Community Activities Center where Col. Haven and Ms. Inge Bülck, Greenland Contractors Site Manager, cut a cake for the people who worked on the project.



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Some of the specifics of the program include:

- Military members can contribute up to 10 percent of their base pay, as long as the annual total of tax-deferred investment doesn't exceed \$14,000 for 2005. Airmen also have the ability to invest all or part of their bonuses or special pay.

- Those serving in tax-free combat zones are allowed up to \$41,000 in annual contributions.

- Military members can enroll through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service web site at <http://www.dfas.mil/emss/>. They can also enroll by filling out a form TSP-U-1 at local military personnel flights, finance offices and family support centers.

- Contribution allocations (how an employee chooses to invest money

among the five funds) can be made by calling the TSP automated ThriftLine (1-877- 968-3778 for employees in the 50 States, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and Canada; 1 (504)-255-8777 for employees elsewhere), or on the TSP web site at <http://www.tsp.gov/>.

- For general TSP questions, call the Air Force Personnel Contact Center at (800) 616-3775. Specific TSP information is available for Air Force military personnel at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift_savings_plan.htm.